

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF EMPLOYERS

Q. Do I have to serve in the military?

A. No. Over 95% of the work force is civilian employees. Each Division and District is commanded by an Army officer, with 2-5 additional officers serving within the Executive office or other functional areas. These officers tour of duty average 2-3 years before re-assignment.

Q. How many people work within the organization?

A. The South Pacific Division headquarters has approximately 120 personnel. In addition, the South Pacific Division has 4 District offices in Albuquerque (xxx personnel); Los Angeles (xxx personnel); San Francisco (xxx personnel) and Sacramento (xxx personnel)) bringing the total to approximately 2,xxx personnel employed within SPD.

Q. What advancement opportunities are available?

A. There is great opportunity for advancement within the organization. For example, entry-level engineers on the intern program receive automatic 2 grade promotions after successfully completing a full year at a specified grade level. An engineer at the GS-5 level will receive a GS-7 after one year and GS-09 the following year and GS-11 the successive year. Opportunities to receive GS-12 and higher promotions is based on an application and selection process.

Q. What are the agency's policies on providing seminars, workshops and training so employees can keep their skills or acquire new ones?

A. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and more specifically the South Pacific Division is investing a great deal of time and resources for providing training opportunities to its employees. Training is not only limited to formal classroom training, but includes workshops, seminars, video training, interactive computer based training, self taught and through the Corps Professional Development Human Services Center.

Q. How much guidance or assistance is made available to individuals in developing career goals?

A. Each employee will develop jointly with his or her supervisor an Individual Development Plan covering a five-year period. This plan addresses career goals, training needs, re-assignment opportunities, etc. Additional mentors, both formal and informal are always available. The intern program also provides a sponsor for each intern that help guide and assist during his or her internship. Also, there are assigned Career Program Managers for various career fields.

Q. What significant organizational changes do you foresee in the near future?

A. The South Pacific Division recently went through an internal re-organization to resemble a regional business center together with the Districts. One way to the door philosophy, working together to better serve the customer. Most District organizational structures are established but are subject to change to align with mission needs and workload. At all times, the well being and impacts to employees is a significant factor in implementing organizational changes.

Q. What accounts for success within the agency?

A. The success of the Corps of Engineers is measured by the success of its people. We take great pride in the professionalism, dedication, and commitment to service, as individuals and as members of a greater group serving the common good, our national needs.

Q. Could you describe your agencies management style and the type of employee who fits well with it? What is the corporate culture?

A. **[Need Help Here]** The Management structure of the Corps is a tiered structure, with a Commanding General officer at the top. Typically served by Senior Civilian executives and military officers. The functional areas (i.e. Engineering, Construction, Real Estate, Resource Management, Environmental, etc) are led by civilians typically in grade GS -12 through GS-15. Our management style is best described as a Project Program Management style which entails a matrix structure of cross-over.

Q. Why do you continue to work for this organization?

A. I continue to work for the Corps of Engineers because I feel that I am able to serve the general public and am able to utilize my education and training in ways that make a difference. The growth opportunities as well as the benefits have been great. Job security has made a difference in this present state of the economy. I am treated as a professional and enjoy the work that I do.

Q. How much responsibility will I have?

A. Initially, responsibility is kept to a minimal until the individual has acquired the necessary training or experience to take on and successfully assume the responsibility associated with the job. We encourage all our employees to be responsible, not only for the job for which they were hired, but for their future with the organization. Responsibility grows as you grow and are willing to take more on. Care is also employed to not give an individual too much responsibility for which they have not been properly trained or prepared to handle.

Q. Will I be on a team or in a group?

A. In most cases, an individual is assigned to a functional element or branch, which has a supervisor and a number of employees, ranging from 4 -20. Within a branch, smaller teams or groups may be formed to work a task, a project or on an assigned committee. Although each individual may have specified assignments, rarely does one work alone with the input or review of others.

Q. What minority programs do you have?

A. Every Corps office has an Equal Employment Opportunity Office under which several Special Emphasis/Minority Programs are in place. Within the South Pacific Division, we have the Asian American/Pacific Islander Employment Program; Black Employment Program; Hispanic Employment Program; Native American/Alaska Native Employment Program and the Federal Women's Program. All employees are encouraged to participate in all program activities and to serve as sponsors or officers within each program area.

Q. How mobile can I be?

A. Actually, there is great opportunity for mobility within the Corps if you so desire. Not only within the South Pacific Division, but anywhere that the Corps has offices. That also includes Europe, Saudi Arabia and parts of Asia and the Pacific. Temporary tour of duty are also available for national or international destinations.

Q. What do you see as the biggest areas of needed improvement within the agency?

A. We recognize that we need to work more in the area of retention in light of the dwindling pool of people with specified skills. The competing economy of salaries can deter someone from Government service since there are fixed pay scales, however; some incentives for recruitment and retention are being implemented.

Q. What is the greatest challenge, from your perspective that the organization faces during the next year?

A. The South Pacific Division and its respective District have a tremendous workload to implement over the next few years. There is more work than resources currently available. We need to work with our customers and sponsors for setting priorities and finding or augmenting resources to do all the desired jobs and projects.

Q. How will I be evaluated in my job?

A. All employees are under the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES), which evaluates job performance, typically over a one-year period, with mid-year reviews scheduled accordingly. The system is a tier evaluation of Exceeding, Meeting or Unsuccessfully performing a specified task or job. The job standards are jointly developed with a supervisor at the beginning of each rating period. Performance awards, both monetary and honorary may be given to any employee based on a job performance evaluation.

Q. What advanced educational opportunities are there (i.e. MS, PhD)?

A. There are many opportunities for a Corps employee to pursue higher education either on their own or through the Corps. The Corps has a program known as Long

Term Training where, if selected, an individual may pursue a higher degree of education at a recognized educational institution at Corps expense as long as it is job related recognized as a benefit to the organization. Employee, upon completion of training has a commitment to remain with the organization in exchange for the amount of time taken to pursue higher education. Night class tuition or others in pursuit of a higher degree may also be refunded or paid for by the Corps on a case-by-case basis.

Q. What is the chain of command for this position?

A. Every position has an immediate first line supervisor and a second line supervisor often referred to as the Senior Rater or Division Chief. In almost all cases, assignments, direction, performances evaluations, disciplinary actions are taken by the first line supervisor, with the knowledge and support of a higher line of management.

Q. How do you encourage employees to keep pace with new technologies?

A. Employees are encouraged to keep pace with new technologies through the day-to-day use of computers, telecommunication equipment, Internet, and other IT equipment etc. available in the work place. Employees with additional interest and personal skills are encouraged to share their talents and integrate them where possible in the work environment. Training tools are also available.

Q. Is there anything demanding or unusual about the job I should know about?

A. In some cases, some positions, typically in management or technical experts are involved in addressing Congressional Letters, making presentations at Public Hearings, budget testimonies or other forums. Others may be placed in the spotlight when dealing with environmentally sensitive issues or disaster related responses where human life is in danger. In most cases, the Public Affairs Officer or a designated agency representative is involved.

Q. What is the pay range for this type of job?

A. All positions within the Corps of Engineers are on a Federal Pay Schedule that is set by the Office of Personnel Management. Depending on entry-level skills, experiences and job requirements, positions may have incremental steps of

promotions tied to the position. Places such as San Francisco and Los Angeles also have locality pay entitlements to meet the higher cost of living demands.

Q. Am I required to get a state license prior to promotions?

A. No, not in most cases. Very few positions required a state license, although we encourage our professional to seek licenses where applicable or desirable.

Q. Will agencies pay for refresher courses for state licenses or certificates?

A. Yes. The Corps will pay in most cases the registration or tuition fees for state licenses refresher course that are directly applicable to your job position.

Q. How much travel will I be required? Local or national?

A. A number of jobs require travel to attend meetings, conferences, workshops or training opportunities. Most travel is short term during the workday, but others may require over night stay. The Government will pay your job related travel expenses and meal.

Q. Are there employee benefits/incentives such as health facilities, fitness programs, etc. offered by your agency?

A. Yes there are. The South Pacific Division and its Districts have what is known as the "Fit-To-Win" program for employees. All employees may participate in this wonderful program. A public health officer oversees the program and a training fitness center is available in the building. Activities such as corporate runs, lunchtime walking, brown bag lunchtime presentations, awareness classes are also made available.